

Understanding Bicycle Markings in Minneapolis

A guide for motorists and bicyclists

Updated January 2012



This information was created by the Minneapolis Public Works Department. For questions about the information in this packet, please contact the Minneapolis Bicycling Program at 612-333-3410.

Some of the illustrations in this packet are based on illustrations by Chicago Cartographics for the Minneapolis Bicycle Map, published by Hedberg Maps, Inc.



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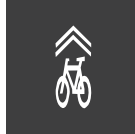
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The Basics



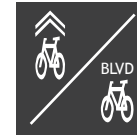
Bike lanes with solid lines

These are for bikes only. Drivers should not cross into them unless you're turning or parking, and be sure to yield to bikes first.



Bike lanes with dashed lines

These give bicyclists a place to ride, but drivers may need to merge into them at certain times. Drivers should yield to bikes before crossing the dotted line or making a turn.



Bike symbols

A bike symbol that is not in a bike lane highlights a designated bike route. Drivers can drive on them as normal, but the bike symbols are a reminder to keep an eye out for bikes and share the road.

For questions about information in this packet, please call 612-333-3410.



Bike Lanes

A bike lane is a striped and signed lane for bicycle traffic. The purpose of a bike lane is to provide a dedicated space on the roadway for bicyclists. They are typically at least 5 feet wide, marked by solid white lines, with a white bicycle symbol each block.

As a bike lane approaches an intersection or bus stop, the white lines are dotted to indicate a shared space between thru bicyclists and turning motorists.

When you drive:

- Whenever you cross a bike lane to prepare for a turn or to park, always yield to thru bicyclists.
- A bike lane is restricted to bicycle traffic, except in instances when you need to turn, enter or leave the roadway or park adjacent to the bike lane.
- When parking next to a bike lane always look for approaching bicyclists before opening your door.
- There is no law that requires a bicyclist to ride in a bike lane. Even on streets with bike lanes, expect to see bicyclists in other lanes.

When you bike:

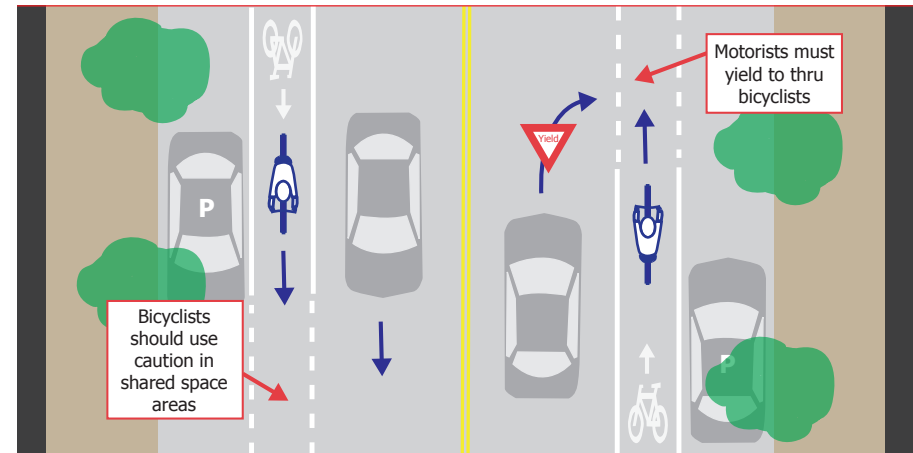
- As you approach an intersection use caution and assume turning or merging motorists do not see you. Wait behind motorists who are in the shared spaced preparing to turn.
- Whenever you enter or exit a bike lane, make sure to look behind you, signal and yield to vehicles already in adjacent travel lanes.
- Always travel in the same direction as traffic, unless the pavement markings in a bike lane allow you to travel against traffic.
- There is no law that requires you to ride in a bike lane. You should use adjacent lanes to pass another bicyclist, to avoid being too close to parked cars, to avoid obstructions or unsafe conditions or to prepare for a turn.



Bike lanes are marked with solid white lines with a white bicycle symbol each block.



Approaching intersections, bike lanes are dashed to indicate a shared space between motorists and bicyclists.



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Green Bike Lanes

Green bike lanes are pavement markings used to highlight locations where motorists merge across or turn across a bike lane. To draw attention and increase safety at these locations, bike lanes are colored green to alert motorists that they must yield to thru bicyclists. Green bike lanes are marked with a solid green background, bounded by dotted white lines.

Green bike lanes are currently located on 15th Ave SE by the U of M, on E 16th St south of downtown, on 1st/Blaisdell Aves in south Minneapolis, and on N 7th St by Target Field.

When you drive:

- When turning across a green bike lane look in your blind spot for bicyclists approaching the intersection.
- If a bicyclist is approaching the intersection, you must stop and let them pass before turning. This is the case regardless of whether the bike lane is colored.

When you bike:

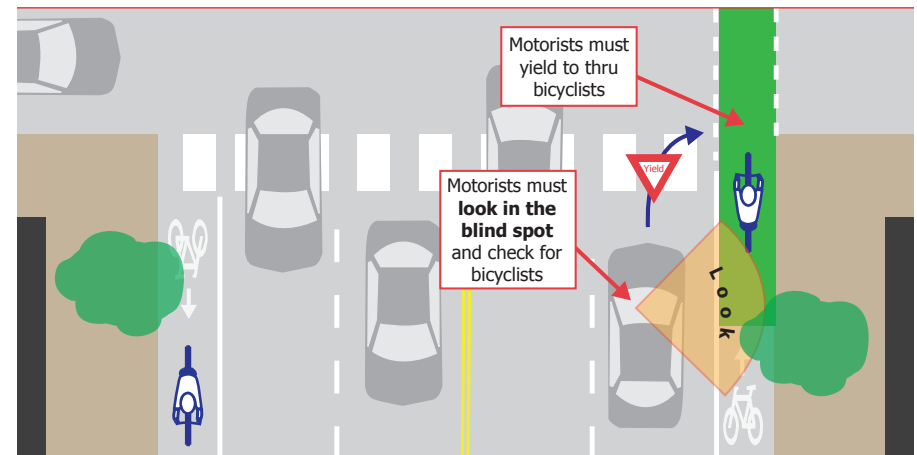
- As you approach an intersection, especially one that includes a green conflict area, use caution and assume turning or merging motorists do not see you.
- Wait behind motorists who are in the shared space preparing to turn.



Some bike lanes are colored green to draw attention at intersections and merge areas.



Turning motorists must yield to thru bicyclists.



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Advisory Bike Lanes

An advisory bike lane is similar to a regular bike lane, but is used on low-volume streets that are narrow. An advisory bike lane is marked with a solid white line on the right (next to parked cars) and a dotted line to the left. These markings give bicyclists a space to ride, but are also available to motorists if space is needed to pass oncoming traffic.

Advisory bike lanes are currently located on E 14th St in the Elliot Park Neighborhood. At this location, the dashed yellow center line was removed and advisory bike lanes were added to the street. Narrow travel lanes now require motorists to be more cautious when negotiating passing vehicles.

When you drive:

- To safely meet an oncoming motorist you are allowed to merge into the bike lane. However, you must first yield to bicyclists in the bike lane.
- Even though the travel area for cars is narrow, it is still a 2-way street.

When you bike:

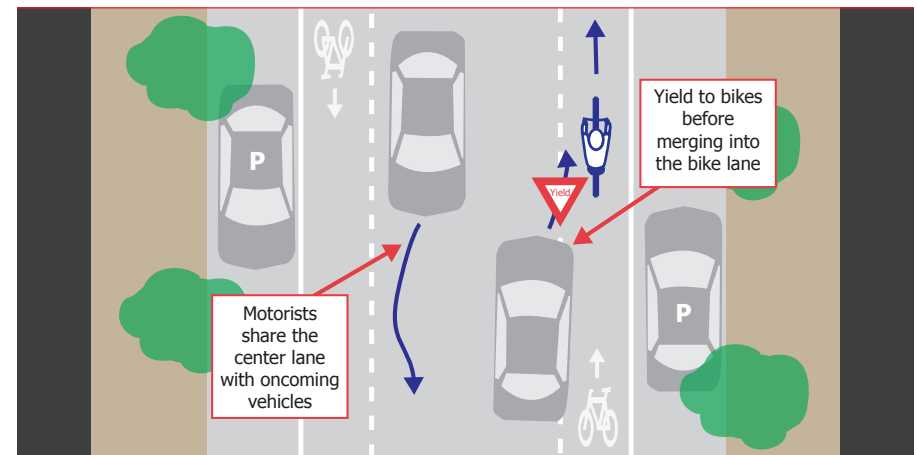
- Be more prepared for a motorist to enter the bike lane than on typical streets.
- Always use caution and assume turning or merging motorists do not see you.



Advisory bike lanes are similar to regular bike lanes, but include a dashed left line instead of a solid line.



To safely meet oncoming vehicles, motorists may need to merge into the bike lane - but, first yield to bicyclists in the bike lane.



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Buffered Bike Lanes

A buffered bike lane is similar to a regular bike lane, but also includes a marked buffer between the bike lane and adjacent travel lanes. The purpose of a buffered bike lane is to provide extra elbow room for bicyclists to increase safety.

The buffer is placed between the bike lane and travel lane. The buffer is marked with white chevrons to indicate that no vehicles are allowed to travel in the buffered area.

Buffered bike lanes are currently located on 1st Ave S between E 40th and 33rd Sts and on Fremont Ave N between N Plymouth and Lowry Aves.

When you drive:

- A buffered bike lane is restricted to bicycle traffic, except in instances when you need to turn or enter or leave the roadway.
- You are not allowed to drive in the bike lane or buffered area, even to pass other motorists.
- Whenever you must cross a bike lane to prepare for a turn, look over your right shoulder for bicyclists approaching the intersection. If a bicyclist is approaching the intersection, you must yield and let them pass before turning.

When you bike:

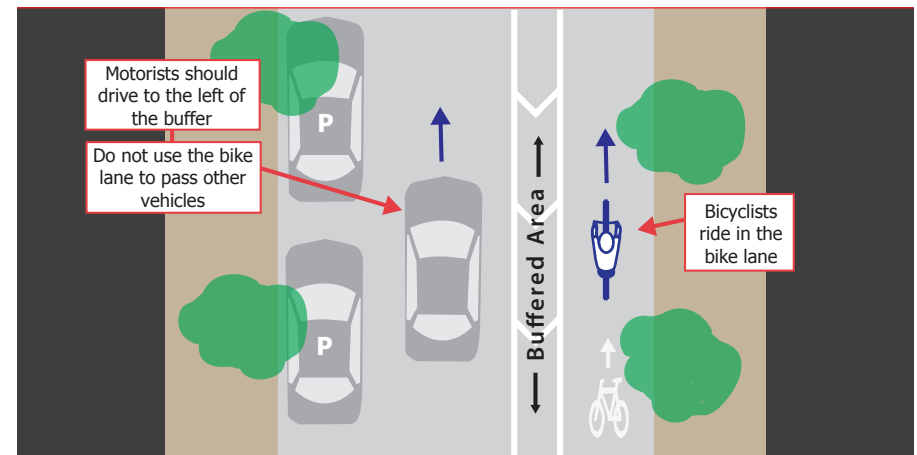
- Don't ride the wrong way in a buffered bike lane. The buffered area is not intended for opposite flow bicycle traffic.
- Whenever you enter or exit the bike lane, make sure to signal and yield to vehicles already in adjacent travel lanes.



Buffered bike lanes include a buffered area between the bike lane and travel lane.



Bicyclists ride in the bike lane and motorists drive to the left of the buffered area.



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Cycle Track

A cycle track is a bicycle lane that has elements of a separated path and an on-street bike lane. It is a striped and signed lane for bicycle traffic with on-street parking to the left of the bike lane with a buffered area between the bike lane and parking. This design provides a space on the roadway for bicyclists who may feel uncomfortable riding in or directly adjacent to a travel lane with motor vehicles. Where cycle tracks are present, it is extremely important for motorists and bicyclists to be cautious at intersections.

A cycle track is currently present on 1st Ave N between N 8th St and Washington Ave.

When you drive or park:

- Never park or stop in the bike lane or buffered area of a cycle track.
- Before parking adjacent to a cycle track, always check parking restriction signs to ensure when and where parking is permitted.
- Before turning across a cycle track, look over your right shoulder and check for bicyclists approaching the intersection. If a bicyclist is approaching the intersection, you must yield and let them pass before turning. Bicyclists may be more difficult to see because they could be coming from behind parked cars.

When you bike:

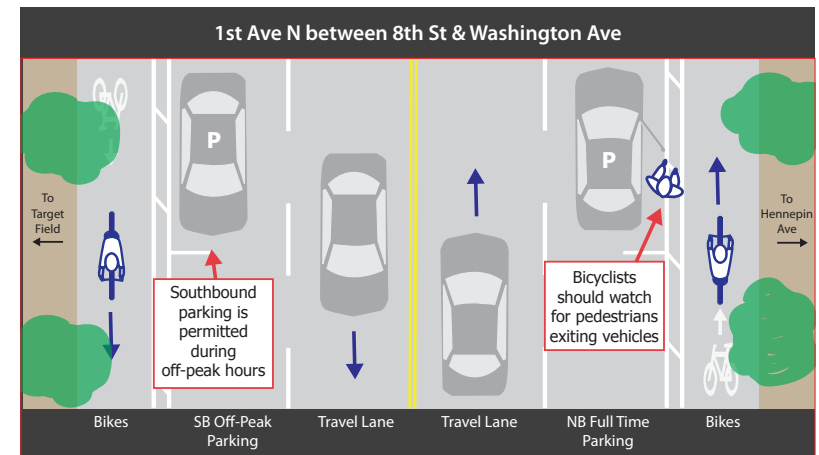
- Unlike most streets with bike lanes, parking is to the left of the cycle track. Watch for passenger's side doors opening and pedestrians crossing the bike lane.
- As you approach an intersection, use caution and assume turning or merging motorists do not see you. It may be more difficult for motorists to see you because you could be coming from behind parked cars.
- If a vehicle is illegally parked or stopped in the cycle track you are allowed to merge left across the parking lane and pass the vehicle in the parking lane or adjacent travel lane.



A cycle track is a bike lane that runs along side the curb with on-street parking to the left.



On 1st Ave N in downtown, motorists must park to the left of the buffered area.



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Shared Lane Markings

Shared lane markings or “sharrows” (derived from “Shared” and “Arrows”) are pavement markings used to mark a designated bike route. Placed in the travel lane, they encourage bicyclists to ride in a safe position outside of the door zone (where driver’s side doors of parked cars open).

Shared lane markings include a bicycle symbol and a double chevron indicating the direction of travel. They do not designate any part of the roadway as either exclusive to motorists or bicyclists. Rather, the symbols highlight the fact that the travel lane is shared.

Sometimes shared lane markings are enhanced with dotted white lines to provide extra awareness that bicyclists are sharing the lane. Enhanced shared lane markings are located along La Salle Ave S between W 15th St and W Franklin Ave. The dotted white lines around the sharrow symbol are intended to create an advisory path for bicyclists to ride along.

When you drive:

- Motor vehicles are permitted to drive in travel lanes where shared lane markings are present. Bicyclists may be traveling in the same lane. Travel behind them until it is safe to pass.
- You are allowed to drive on or over the markings and are not restricted to driving to the left of the symbols.
- As with any street, bicyclists are allowed to ride on the road. If you find yourself driving behind a bicyclist and need to pass, overtake the bicyclist at a safe speed and safe clearance. State law indicates that a motorist can only overtake a bicyclist if there is a safe passing distance of at least 3 feet. Often, you will need to change lanes to pass bicyclists.

When you bike:

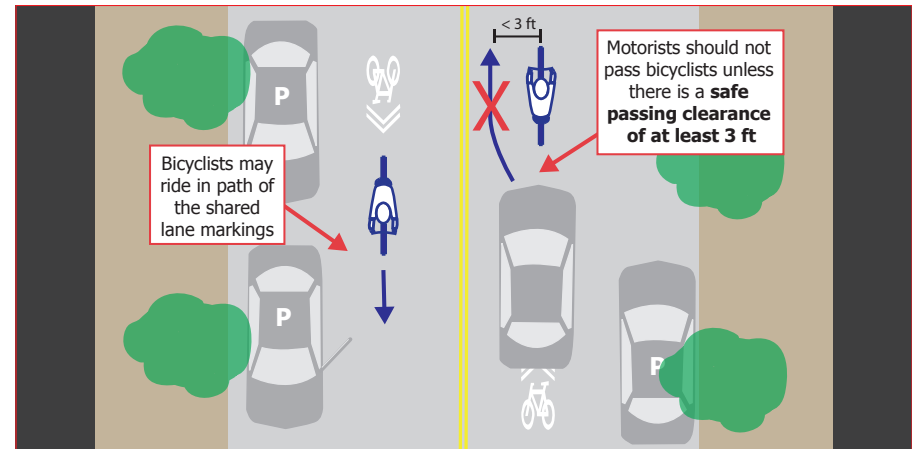
- You may, but are not required to ride on or over the shared lane markings. While the markings are placed in a location to keep you out of the door zone, you should always ride where you feel most comfortable and safe.
- Always travel in the same direction as traffic as indicated by the direction of the shared lane markings.



Shared lane markings are used to mark a designated bike route and encourage bicyclists to ride in a safe position.



Enhanced shared lanes on La Salle Ave S create an advisory path for bicyclists to ride along.



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Green Shared Lanes

Green shared lane markings are similar to regular shared lane markings or “sharrows” but also include a solid green background. Like regular shared lanes, green shared lanes are used to mark a designated bike route. Placed toward the center of the travel lane, they encourage bicyclists to ride in a safe position outside of the door zone (where driver’s side doors of parked cars open).

Green shared lanes do not designate any part of the roadway as either being exclusive to motorists or exclusive to bicyclists. Rather, the green background highlights that the travel lane is shared and that motorists should expect to see bicyclists.

Green shared lanes are currently present on Bryant Ave S between W Lake and 40th Sts, and between W 49th and 50th Sts. They are also located on Hennepin Ave in downtown Minneapolis.

When you drive:

- Motor vehicles are permitted to drive on streets and in lanes that contain green lanes. The one exception is on Hennepin Avenue in downtown where you are only permitted to use the green lane if you are turning right.
- You are allowed to drive on or over the green lane and are not restricted to driving to the left of green lane.
- Bicyclists are allowed to ride in the green lane. If you find yourself driving behind a bicyclist and need to pass, overtake the bicyclist at a safe speed and safe clearance. State law indicates that a motorist can only overtake a bicyclist if there is a safe passing distance of at least 3 feet. Often, you will need to change lanes to pass bicyclists.

When you bike:

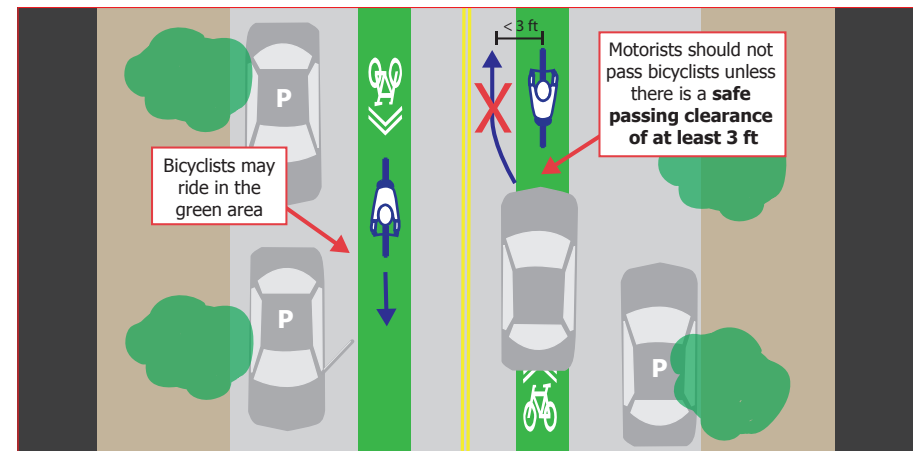
- Riding in the green area keeps you out of the door zone and keeps you visible to motorists at cross streets.
- You may, but are not required to ride in the green area of the lane. While the markings are placed in a location to keep you out of the door zone, you should always ride where you feel most comfortable and safe.



Green shared lanes are used to mark a designated bike route and encourage bicyclists to ride in a safe position.



Bicyclists may ride in the green area.



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Bike Boulevard

A bike boulevard is a lower-volume, lower-speed street that has been optimized for bike traffic. The purpose of a bike boulevard is to provide bicyclists, especially those who are not comfortable riding on busy streets a safer and more relaxing place to ride. While many residential streets are already favorable to most bicyclists, a bike boulevard goes the extra step to provide safe crossings at major streets and encourage motorists to travel at slow speeds, while reducing the frequency of stop signs.

This environment is created through a variety of traffic calming and design elements such as speed humps, traffic circles, curb extensions, medians, and traffic signals. Many of the changes, especially the intersection treatments, improve safety for pedestrians and motorists, too. Bike boulevards are designated with pavement markings that include a large bicycle symbol with the text “BLVD.”

When you drive:

- You are allowed to drive on and over bike boulevard pavement markings.
- If you find yourself driving behind a bicyclist and need to pass, only overtake the bicyclist at a safe speed and only if there is a legally safe passing distance of at least 3 feet.
- Motor vehicles are permitted on almost all portions of bike boulevards unless signs or pavement markings indicate otherwise. Turning from or onto a bike boulevard is restricted at some intersections.

When you bike:

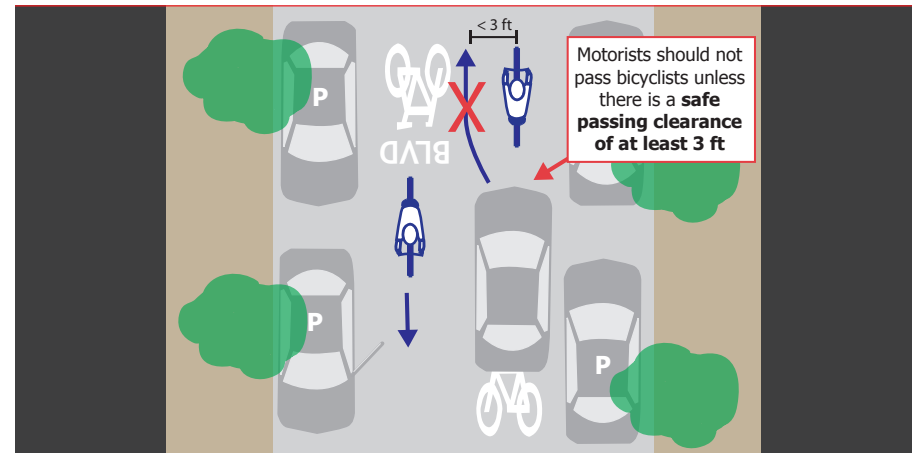
- While a bike boulevard prioritizes bicycle traffic, you must still obey all traffic signs and signals. Bicyclists must yield to pedestrians and motorists who have the right-of-way.



Bike boulevards are designated bike routes on quiet streets and are marked with large bicycle symbols with the text “BLVD.”



At some intersections, turning from or onto a bike boulevard is restricted for motorists.



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Bike Box

A bike box is a type of advanced stop bar that is used at some signalized intersections. The bike box includes two elements 1) an advanced stop line for motorists to wait behind and 2) a marked spaced for bicyclists to wait in. When the traffic signal is red, motorists must wait behind the bike box and behind the stop line. Bicyclists are allowed to ride into the bike box and wait for a green signal. When the traffic signal turns green, motorists must yield to bicyclists before proceeding or making a turn.

The purpose of a bike box is to allow bicyclists to wait at the front of traffic queues so they are more visible to motorists. This is to improve the safety of bicyclists at intersections.

When you drive:

- If the traffic signal is red, you must wait behind the bike box and behind the advanced stop bar.
- When the traffic signal changes to green, you must yield to bicyclists who are waiting in the bike box.
- Look for additional bicyclists that may be approaching on your side.

When you bike:

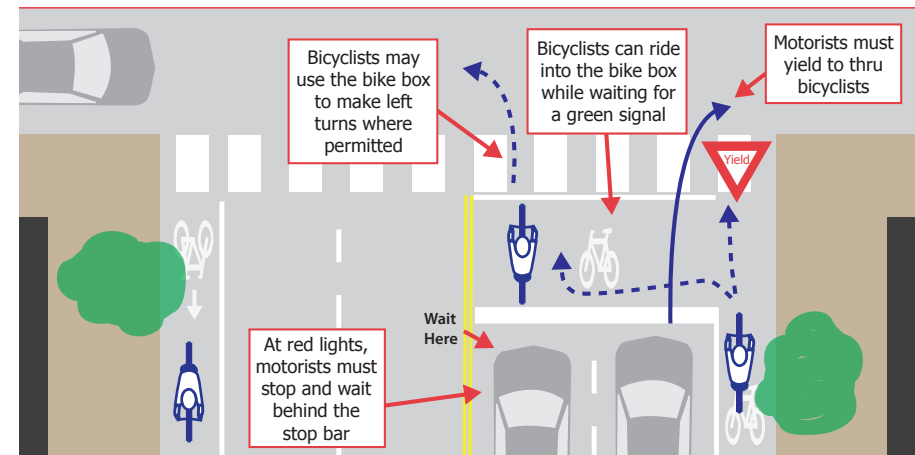
- As you approach an intersection with bike box you may ride up to the front of the traffic queue. If the traffic signal is red, you may wait in the bike box.
- When the traffic signal changes to green, you may proceed through the intersection or make a turn.



Bike boxes are placed at intersections to allow bicyclists to wait at the front of traffic queues.



At red lights, motorists must stop and wait behind the bike box and stop bar.



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